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ABSTRACT

The first program year evaluation of the Family Reading project addresses implementation issues at the national and local levels relating to the literacy intervention model designed for the project. The project is a collaborative effort between the National Council of La Raza and the Educational Testing Service to improve literacy levels of Latino adults participating in community-based organizations nationwide. The project provides for: (1) direct instruction to parents; (2) use of home literacy events to involve both parents and children at home in literacy-related activities; and (3) creation of a library of high-interest books for participant use. The project management team consists of the Project Director; a Literacy Specialist who provides technical assistance and liaison; and the Chief Consultant, who assists with curriculum development, evaluation, and training. Initially, five community-based organizations implemented the program; others will be added in the second and third program years. The report focuses on implementation of the Parent and Child Literacy Intervention Model, and addresses instructional and training issues relative to the Chief Consultant's participation in the family reading program. The report outlines general evaluation questions for the first year that relate to specific program objectives, presents recommendations and discussion by the National Council of la Raza and the local project sites, briefly discusses design and implementation problems, and concludes with a discussion of evaluation results. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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National Council of La Raza

Family Reading Project

First Year Report

1989

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First Year Evaluation of the Family Reading Project

Introduction

This is the first program year evaluation of the Family Reading project conducted by Educational Testing Service (Pasadena Field Office). The first year report addresses implementation issues -- both at the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) staff level, and local program level (demonstration sites) -- relative to the implementation of the literacy intervention model designed for this project to improve parents reading and writing skills.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Family Reading project represents a collaborative effort between the National Council of La Raza and Educational Testing Service (ETS) to improve the literacy levels of Latino adults participating in community based organizations (CBO's) nationwide. The Family Reading project uses a model developed by Dr. Ron Solorzano -- from ETS' Pasadena Field Office -- called PACLIM (Parent and Child Literacy Intervention Model). The model provides for the following: 1) direct instruction to parents, 2) use of Home Literacy Events (HLE) to involve both parents and children at home in literacy-related activities, and 3) the creation of a library of high interest books housed at the project site for parents to check-out and read at home for themselves, or to their children.

Hispanic CBO's nationwide (affiliates of the NCLR) submitted proposals to participate in the Family Reading project. Five were selected to implement the program. In the second and third program years, several new CBOs will be added to the program. The present report covers the first implementation year.

The Family Reading project management team consists of the Project Director, who oversees the general running of the program; a Literacy Specialist who provides technical assistance to local Family Reading sites and acts as liaison between the Project Director and the Chief Consultant to the project, and the Chief Consultant, who assists with curriculum development, training, and evaluation for the project.

The report that follows mainly focusses on the implementation of the PACLIM model and addresses instructional and training issues relative to the Chief Consultant's participation in the Family Reading Program. Therefore, this report focusses mainly on evaluation questions relative to the family reading model (i.e., PACLIM) and activities associated with the Chief Consultant's responsibilities.

The PACLIM model is part of the NCLR's Family Reading project. Since the NCLR conducts evaluations of all their programs -- of which Family Reading is part -- additional analyses of data relative to the Family Reading project were conducted by NCLR staff.

General Evaluation Questions for the First Year

The first year evaluation centered on implementation issues. As the Family Reading program began, startup activities -- at both the national and local program level -- were examined to judge their effectiveness relative to the program model, and their timeliness relative to the proposed schedule. The two research questions below guided the first year evaluation.

1. To what extent did the NCLR program staff conduct the proposed activities to implement the PACLIM model?

2. To what Extent did local participating programs conduct the proposed activities necessary to implement the PACLIM model?

1. To What Extent did the NCLR Program Staff Conduct the Proposed Activities to Implement the Model?

There were several implementation objectives delineated in the initial Family Reading proposal (submitted to OBEMLA) that NCLR staff needed to conduct that are addressed in this section. They include the following:

1. select five demonstration sites by the end of the second project month;

2. provide challenge grants averaging $10,000 each for the establishment of the Family Reading projects in an initial group of five Hispanic community-based organizations by the end of the third project month;

3. develop program curricula and training materials to support the demonstration of Family Reading programs at the Hispanic community-based organization (CBO);

4. provide staff training and technical assistance to those groups receiving challenge grants to assist them in implementing the PACLIM model and operating effective Family Reading programs; initial training will occur by the end of the sixth program month and further training will be provided once a year later;

5. make at least one monitoring visit to each grant program to identify project strengths and weaknesses, recommend any necessary improvements, and ensure the data collection and evaluation process is proceeding smoothly by the end of the first program year.

NCLR Objective 1: Selection of sites. The first task was to select the sites to participate in the Family Reading Project. Selection of the sites was based on a competitive grant process. Interested NCLR affiliates (agencies) submitted a written proposal describing their commitment to the project as well as the amount and nature of additional funding that the agency could contribute. Proposals were received and reviewed by NCLR staff and judged on their merits relative to the criteria necessary to implement the

Family Reading project. As a result, the following five sites were selected:

1. El Centro de Servicios Sociales
   Lorain, Ohio

2. El Hogar del Nino
   Chicago, Illinois

3. Guadalupe Center, Inc.
   Kansas City, Missouri

4. Latino Resource Center
   Santa Monica, California

5. United Community Center/Centro de la Communidad Unida
   Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Family Reading sites were selected by the second project month as stated in the grant proposal.

NCLR Objective 2: Provide challenge grants averaging $10,000. Once the five sites were selected, each was given (on the average) $10,000 to implement the Family Reading (PACLIM) project. The five sites received their appropriations to acquire instructional materials, computer software and to buy portions of staff time. Projects received their challenge grants by the third month of the project calendar.

NCLR Objective 3: Develop curricula and training materials. A Curriculum Advisory Committee was formed and convened on October 28, 1988 to assist in the development of curricula for use with the PACLIM model. The committee was composed of experts in the area of curriculum relative to adult education. The following persons served as expert resources on the committee:

Dr. Alan Crawford, Professor
Education Department
California State University, Los Angeles

Dr. Esteban Diaz, Professor
Education Department
California State University, San Bernardino

Dr. Pedro Pedraza
Centro de Estudios Puerto Riquenos
Hunter College, CUNY

Dr. Concepcion Valadez, Professor
Graduate School of Education
University of California, Los Angeles

Dr. Roach Van Allen
Retired Professor and author of numerous books and articles relative to the Language Experience Approach

Further, the committee included the grantees' Family Reading coordinator, who brought knowledge and experience working with community based organizations to the committee's proceedings. Each program added their input relative to the constraints and nature of their community based programs. Their input was valuable in keeping the committee "on track" and sensitive to local program needs. Members from the selected CBO sites serving on the committee were the following:

Mr. Javier Badillo
El Centro de Servicios

Ms. Jane Garza
El Hogar del Nino

Ms. Adelia Hurley
El Hogar del Nino

Mr. Gilbert Guerrero
Guadalupe Center Inc.

Mr. Oscar Mireles
El Centro de la Communidad Unida

Mr. Antonio Vasquez
Latino Resource Center

In addition to these committee members, NCLR staff and the ETS Chief Consultant to the project served on the committee.

Various questions and concerns were prepared before the meeting and used as a guide by NCLR staff to focus the committee's direction towards the three components of the PACLIM model (i.e., family chronicles, Home Literacy Events, CBO library activities). The committee provided suggestions on topics such as the following: 1) themes for Language Experience stories, 2) methods for teaching literacy using the Language Experience Approach (LEA), 3) program management issues, 4) suggestions for Home Literacy Events, and 5) instructional and free reading materials appropriate for adults using this model.

Information from this committee meeting was synthesized into a working draft and mailed to the Expert Committee members for their final review. Their final comments were incorporated into the Family Reading Project "Pilot Curriculum" handbook which was distributed to each of the participating demonstration sites. All products developed during this first year are available from the NCLR.

<u>NCLR Objective 4: Provide staff training and technical assistance to Family Reading projects</u>. On January 26-29, (1989) training and technical assistance was provided to programs participating in the Family Reading project. During the training workshops, topics such as the following were covered:

* The Language Experience Approach to Language Development
* Implementing Family Reading Programs: Modeling the Instructional Process
* Evaluating Family Reading programs
* Program Management and Organization

Representatives from all but one of the Family Reading projects were in attendance. (the one absent project was given a special training session two weeks later). Hands-on training was provided on the LEA approach to teaching reading and writing. Computer instruction was also incorporated into the sessions. The training took place by the sixth program month, consistent with the proposed timeline.

In addition to these workshops, the Family Reading Literacy Specialist visited selected sites to assist with start-up activities. The Specialist also assisted the other Family Reading programs via phone and mail communication.

NCLR Objective 5: Make monitoring visit to each Family Reading site. The project's chief consultant conducted site visits (lasting a minimum of two days at each site) to all but one demonstration site by the end of the first program year as described in the initial proposal (the program director from the one site not visited was interviewed by phone). The following sites were visited:

* Guadalupe Center, Kansas City, Missouri
* United Community Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
* El Hogar del Nino, Chicago, Illinois
* El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Lorain, Ohio
* Latino Resource Organization, Santa Monica, California (Phone interview only)

The purpose of the site visits was to monitor the progress of the PACLIM model relative to staffing needs, instructional environment, recruitment of support staff and parents, use of materials, and teaching methods. During the visits, the consultant performed three major activities; 1) interviewed program staff, 2) observed lessons in progress, and 3) conducted LEA lessons with the parents. Each of these activities are discussed below. Samples of recent instructional and program management materials were gathered by the consultant to be shared with other Family Reading projects.

PROGRAM SITE INTERVIEWS

The Chief consultant conducted interviews with program coordinators and staff (staff could be volunteer instructors or administrative assistants) to determine the Family Reading program's needs, review the materials being used and examine the instructional management practices being implemented (e.g., grouping, computer use, monitoring Home Literacy Events, etc.). A list of questions drafted beforehand was used as a guide for each site interview. Open-ended questions were also used to allow respondents to elaborate on their answers.

The following topics continually surfaced during the staff interviews: 1) staffing needs, 2) recruitment strategies, and 3) instructional management practices. All three are discussed below.

Staffing. The consultant found that most programs had recruited volunteers to assist with the LEA lessons and to assist in providing supplemental instruction to parents. The use of volunteers seemed beneficial to program staff in that this allowed the Family Reading coordinator additional time to devote to record keeping, instructional management and recruitment tasks. In the cases where volunteers were recruited, the project coordinator provided training on the PACLIM model.

Family Reading coordinators felt the need to recruit volunteers or pay additional staff to assist with the general running of the program. Some programs were successful in recruiting volunteers -- who received class credit -- from local universities and colleges to assist with the LEA lessons. In the end, coordinators had staffed their programs sufficiently to implement the Family Reading program, however, most felt the need for additional staff support.

Recruitment. The need for better parent and staff recruitment strategies was a popular topic during the interviews. Program coordinators were anxious to find better ways to recruit volunteers or hire assistants to help with the daily management activities of the program. Further, some programs wanted suggestions on how to recruit eligible parents to the Family Reading program. Staff presented the types of materials used to attract parents to the Family Reading program and discussed the different locations (e.g., churches, social service organizations, etc.) the program had earmarked for parent recruitment.

Generally speaking, programs recruited the numbers of participants they expected. However, some took longer to recruit their parents than others. Programs usually recruited at local churches, schools, and social service agencies. Programs used radio PSA's, flyers, and general canvassing techniques as well as word-of-mouth to get their message to prospective parents.

Despite these efforts, program staff noted that it was difficult to filter out the parents needing literacy instruction but who had no children in Title VII school programs, in public schools, or who had no children who were designated Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Instructional management. Programs had provided parents with the basic necessities to benefit from the PACLIM components of the Family Reading program. Papers, pencils, folders and supplementary materials were available to the parents. Further, parents had the opportunity to use computers and save their stories on floppy disks. Parents were provided 3X5 cards and file boxes to store important words they would use in their stories. Most programs had a designated place for their CBO library and had stocked it with books, magazines etc. However, most programs felt the need to locate more high-interest materials for their parents.

OBSERVATION OF ONGOING SESSIONS

In most cases, the consultant had the opportunity to observe Family Reading lessons in progress. During these observations, the consultant recorded teaching methods being employed, reviewed materials being used, and noted the instructional environment where teaching and other activities took place.

Methods. A variety of instructional methods were observed in use. For instance, in one project, one-on-one teaching was employed. In another, parents were brought together at the beginning of the session for whole-group instruction, then divided into smaller groups for additional instruction. These smaller groups were usually grouped by language. For instance, learners who were ready to receive English instruction were grouped separately from those not ready to write in English. Volunteers were especially helpful working with these smaller groups.

In still another program, parents received group instruction during the whole session. In this case, discussion on a particular topic was well developed before parents began work on their stories. For instance, parents in some cases would use the entire session to discuss their views about a particular topic, then save the next session to write about it. Once parents were ready to write their stories, a volunteer would circulate around the room providing assistance to parents as needed.

Since the LEA method does not mandate specific curricula (or commercial texts), the "manner" (or method) in which parents' stories were solicited and documented was the important concern during these site observations. For instance, the method staff used to discuss a topic (or prompt) and solicit input from parents to eventually generate a story was the key element examined. Of those sessions observed by the consultant, staff did provide appropriate discussion for subsequent stories and they used Word Banks (which contained the parents' important words used in stories) to develop parents' vocabulary. In instances where the consultant could not directly observe the lessons, program staff reviewed the procedures and demonstrated materials normally used during the instructional sessions.

Notes on the instructional sessions observed were compiled by the consultant and shared with local program staff. A discussion followed with the consultant pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons observed.

Materials. Commercially developed instructional materials play a supplementary role in the instructional component of the PACLIM model. For example, programs only need the basic types of materials to implement the LEA lessons, such as paper and pencil to write stories, and folders to file the stories. Programs do need floppy disks to input stories onto the computer, and all programs provided them in their computer labs.

Although commercially developed materials play a minor role during the LEA component of PACLIM, they can play a greater role relative to the CBO

library. For instance, all programs visited used additional supportive materials (housed in the CBO library) for instruction such as magazines, "novelas", newspapers, and videos to provide stimulus for parents' stories or for parents' free-reading pleasure.

Environment. During the observations, the consultant was able to view the instructional environment and the locations of the computer lab and CBO library. In all cases, a location was set aside -- with tables -- for the LEA writing exercises. Each project site had the computer lab operating and located close to the instructional setting. One program provided two locations for instruction while the computers were located at only one of the sites. All but one site had organized the CBO library in close proximity to the instructional section.

One project had an agreement with the local public school to use classroom space for Family Reading evening classes. Adjacent to the classroom was the school library that parents were permitted to use if they wished. (Project organizational floor plans are provided in a later section of this report.)

CONDUCT LEA LESSON WITH PARENTS

The consultant conducted demonstration lessons for parents and project staff on LEA methodology and Home Literacy Events. In addition, the consultant reviewed the various components of the PACLIM model with both parents and staff before conducting the Language Experience activities. Parents participated in the lesson while program staff observed and took notes. Two important prompts were used during the demonstration lessons. One topic addressed the theme of, "the importance of education for the program parents' children," and the other addressed Home Literacy Events. The lessons lasted about two hours. Once the demonstration lessons were completed, the consultant reviewed the methods used and outcomes with program staff.

Recommendations and Discussion: NCLR Staff. In sum, all five NCLR staff objectives have been carried out in this Family Reading program year and generally in a timely manner pursuant to the initial proposal submitted to OBEMLA.

Since this first year evaluation is formative in nature, the emphasis is on identifying strengths and weaknesses of the Family Reading program relative to both general implementation issues (staffing, recruitment, etc.) and specific issues concerning the PACLIM model.

Therefore, as a result of this first year investigation, some areas that need modification are addressed. The suggestions are presented in the form of recommendations for future program development for NCLR staff.

Recommendation 1: Continue to develop instructional materials describing LEA teaching techniques.

Local program staff need ongoing assistance with the LEA teaching methodology. Since the intervention used for improving parents' literacy skills (i.e., Language Experience Approach) does not "drive" a particular curriculum, the way in which the approach is used is of utmost importance. Therefore, additional materials (e.g., lessons) guiding local program staff through the various Language Experience stages would be beneficial. Further, video tapes of actual LEA lessons would be helpful so local programs can see samples of actual lessons taking place. Also, video tapes can be shared among the Family Reading sites and re-used in the event of staff turnover.

Finally, some programs have parents who are ready to make the transition into English reading and writing. Materials focussing in on this "transitional" stage from Spanish to English would be very helpful to local program staff. Materials that address areas such as, "cognates", similarities of literacy in Spanish and English, similar concept acquisition processes, etc. might be developed by NCLR staff.

Recommendation 2: Literacy Specialist should continue to play an active role providing technical assistance to local project sites relative to instruction and program management by regularly calling and mailing materials to Family Reading program staff.

The NCLR Literacy Specialist should continue to take an active role in providing local demonstration sites materials and suggestions on how to use the LEA instructional methods with their participants, how to generate and monitor Home Literacy Events, and how to utilize the CBO library materials to their fullest extent. If possible, the Literacy Specialist should plan on at least on visit -- per site -- to assist in monitoring the progress of the model.

Recommendation 3: Chief Consultant continue to play a role providing technical assistance to local project sites relative to instruction and program management.

The Chief Consultant's role in the Family Reading project was intended to diminish over time. The rationale was that the Consultant would train NCLR staff in the PACLIM model, and they -- in turn -- would provide the necessary training, materials, and technical support to the participating projects. Nonetheless, it is clear from data gathered from this report that local programs need ongoing technical assistance.

Much of the rationale for the Consultant's continued role with local programs is based on the fact that local Family Reading Coordinators were performing dual roles. That is, Family Reading coordinators were participating in the following two functions: 1) instruction, and 2) management. Thus, both instructional materials and suggestions in program management were needed to help the Family Reading programs organize the various forms, materials and records that go along with operating the program.

Videos of training sessions conducted by the Chief Consultant could be shared with the Family Reading programs. These videos could address instructional methodology, appropriate materials for use with the LEA approach, and suggestions for program management.

Finally, a unique feature of the Family Reading program is that it incorporates technology into the instructional program for parents. While, generally speaking, local programs are integrating technology into the instructional process (e.g., word processing), few programs have taken advantage of the computer modem. Thus, additional assistance relative to the computer modem is needed (e.g., setup, operation, etc.). Programs can share ideas, written stories, and teaching strategies via the modem with other affiliate programs.

Further, programs can begin to develop additional lessons using the word processing and graphics software programs. The successful lessons can be shared with other Family Reading programs. Therefore, in sum, the Chief Consultant should continue to play a role in providing this technology-related assistance.

The next section will address implementation issues at the local Family Reading site.

2. To What Extent did the Local Demonstration Sites Conduct the Proposed Activities to Implement the Model?

Data necessary to respond to local program objectives were gathered from the consultant's program monitoring visits and from quarterly reports submitted by the Family Reading project coordinators to the NCLR. The local program objectives are outlined below.

1. Improve parents' writing and reading skills (in English) as measured by holistic pre- and post scores (years 2 & 3).

2. Have adults create family chronicles based on family themes (e.g., birthdays, weddings, celebrations, etc.).

3. Have adults use computers to write, edit and print their family-related stories.

4. Improve the reading and writing habits of adults as measured by increased reporting of free reading at home (years 2 & 3).

5. Involve both parents and children in specified literacy related events in the home.

Two objectives presented above (1 and 4) are actually outcome measures that will be addressed in years two and three of the Family Reading project. They are listed here only to give an overview of the learner outcome evaluation design and to describe the nature of the assessment procedure used in the LEA component of the PACLIM model. Further, the two objectives are

presented in this report since pre-test data on these learner outcomes were collected as part of the first Family Reading program year.

Local program objective 1: Improve parents' English writing and reading skills. This objective will be addressed in years two and three. Nonetheless, it is appropriate at this time to review the process that will be taken to judge whether learner progress is being made. Since the instructional model primarily uses the Language Experience Approach to learning to read and write (a method focussing on writing), it is natural to evaluate learner progress using a process that examines learners' actual writing samples.

It is important to note that the decision to holistically score parents' writing samples was made after the initial procedure selected was deemed inadequate. For example, writing samples were going to be scored using portions of the California Adult Learner Progress Evaluation Procedure (CALPEP). However, since the CALPEP procedure works best with one-on-one tutoring, and most of the Family Reading sites conduct whole-group instruction, it was decided to use the holistic procedure. Further, the availability and interest of ETS staff to train NCLR staff in implementing this procedure made the decision even more appealing.

Therefore, in order to evaluate learner progress, the holistic scoring procedure was adapted to assess parents' LEA writing samples. This method, used extensively in teacher certification examinations developed by ETS, involves an exhaustive process of setting criteria for rating papers (or writing samples); and an equally stringent process to ensure inter-rater reliability for scoring writing samples. NCLR staff were trained by ETS "holistic scoring" specialists at the ETS offices in Emeryville, California. The Chief Consultant provided follow-up assistance on holistic scoring procedures prior to the first scoring session.

The unique characteristic of holistic scoring is that it compliments the instructional method used to improve parents' literacy levels (i.e., LEA). In addition to this "instruction-assessment" match, the holistic scoring procedure analyzes both English and Spanish writing samples.

Although the goal of the Family Reading project is to improve parents' English writing and reading proficiencies, evaluating native language literacy is an important precursor to the eventual English acquisition process. The instructional model used in the Family Reading program addresses this issue in an innovative manner. For instance, a typical progress evaluation scenario for a LEP adult in the Family Reading program might proceed as follows:

> Parents are asked to respond to a pre-writing assessment prompt in English. If they cannot, they receive a "no response" score and are asked to respond in Spanish. This response is holistically scored giving the learner two scores (i.e., one in English and one in Spanish). An intermediate holistic "cut-off" score from a parents' Spanish writing sample signals the Family Reading staff to transition the

learner into English writing. With pre-requisite literacy skills developed in the native language, second language acquisition is promoted. The parents' subsequent English writing samples are holistically post-tested yielding a progress measure for English literacy improvement.

Therefore, as parents begin to learn English, a holistic score can be given to both their Spanish and English writing samples. In this way a true literacy measure -- in both languages -- is produced.

This procedure effectively addresses crucial second language acquisition issues relative to adults. That is, adults' writing and reading strategies acquired in the native language can be transferred to the second language making the eventual English acquisition process easier and faster.

The procedure to activate the holistic scoring assessment has been implemented in all Family Reading sites. NCLR staff identified appropriate family-related "prompts" (topics that parents will be responding to in writing) and developed "rubrics" (or criteria) for raters to use when scoring the writing samples.

Assisting with the selection of writing prompts was a "blue ribbon" review team composed of Dr. Agnes Yamada (California State University, Dominguez Hills), Barbara Voltmer, Program Administrator (Educational Testing Service), Dr. Ron Solorzano, the project Chief Consultant, and NCLR Education Research Specialist Dr. Sylvia Alatorre Alva. Prompts were sent out to Family Reading programs and returned to the NCLR offices for subsequent scoring. A scoring team composed of staff from the NCLR and the project's Chief Consultant scored the writing samples. The post writing assessments were mailed out to Family Reading projects at the end of the first program year. Results will be available in evaluation reports of the local projects.

Local program objective 2: Create family chronicles. Creating family chronicles (stories) is crucial to the instructional model used in the Family Reading project. The chronicles are developed by using the Language Experience Approach. All Family Reading projects are using this approach with their parents. Parents are keeping their stories in folders provided by local program staff. Topics are generated by the group, then individuals elaborate on the topics to form their own stories. Once parents have written their stories, they input them into the computer and print them out as finished products. Parents -- in turn -- read these stories at home to their children. Program staff also provided learners with "word banks" (3X5 cards with accompanying file box) to store the vocabulary words used in their stories.

During this first program year, due to delays in recruiting and program implementation, Family Reading coordinators began implementing the instruction and producing family chronicles later than anticipated. Nonetheless, it appears that parents will complete at least five stories before the end of the program year plus the pre- and post writing assessment samples.

Local program objective 3: Adults' computer use. All programs had the computer lab established. In all but one case, the computers were located in close proximity to the instructional location and accessible to adults. Appropriate computer furniture, hardware and software were included in all Family Reading computer labs. Some programs started using the computer immediately to enter parents' stories while others waited to get parents acclimated to the Family Reading program. All but one program had parents using computers by the first program year.

Local program objective 4: Increasing adults' reading and writing habits. Increasing parents' reading and writing habits is an outcome measure that will be assessed in years two and three of the Family Reading project. The procedure used to assess changes in learners' reading and writing habits was taken from the California Adult Learner Progress Evaluation Process (CALPEP). Specifically, four items relative to learners' reading and writing habits were borrowed from CALPEP and used in the Family Reading project. The CALPEP items used are based on learner self-reporting, and they track changes in learners' reading and writing habits over time. CALPEP was developed by Dr. Solorzano under contract with the California State Library.

Information on parents' reading and writing habits is gathered -- using a questionnaire -- during the intake process and again after five or six months. The procedure documents change in the frequency and difficulty level of materials read and written by the learner.

Analysis of results of the post Family Reading Questionnaires will be conducted by NCLR staff and included in local evaluation reports for each year of the Family Reading project.

Local program objective 5: Involve parents and children in Home Literacy Events. Improving parents' literacy skills so they can -- in turn -- influence their childrens' reading and writing progress is a major consideration of the PACLIM model. Therefore, as soon as possible (at the initial intake interview), program staff discuss the importance of Home Literacy Events (HLE's) with parents and parents decide on the types of Home Literacy Events they will perform with their children. Parents also agree to conduct a specified number of literacy events at home.

Incorporating Home Literacy Events into the LEA lessons is important. Family Reading staff are encouraged to begin each instructional session discussing the progress parents are making with Home Literacy Events. Parents -- in turn -- are encouraged to write about their successes with the literacy events and use these experiences as part of their collection of family-related stories.

One "prompt" was developed especially to address the Home Literacy Event component of the PACLIM model. The consultant provided a demonstration lesson with parents on Home Literacy Events during the site visitations. The "prompt" used in the demonstration lesson is recommended for all programs to use to encourage parents to engage in these activities and is included in the Family Reading "Pilot Curriculum" handbook.

Recommendations and Discussion: Local Family Reading Programs

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this first year program evaluation is to identify the components of the program that are being implemented, which are not, and why certain activities are working better than others. Based on data gathered for this first reporting cycle, all Family Reading sites are implementing the PACLIM model satisfactorily. There were tasks that need to be further developed and continued. They are outlined below in the from of recommendations for the next program year.

Recommendation 1: Programs should appoint or recruit an instructional leader/teacher whose sole responsibility is to provide instruction to parents.

The Family reading coordinator should recruit a volunteer (or hire an assistant) to help with the general management activities of the program (e.g., follow-up phone calls, mailers, recruitment, etc.). Perhaps parent agency directors can provide in-kind support to the Family Reading program to assist the coordinators.

Recommendation 2: Get a commitment from parent agency to provide fiscal support or in-kind support (space, materials, volunteers) to the Family Reading project.

In some cases, Family Reading coordinators are performing other tasks for the parent agency. The parent agency should relieve the coordinator as much as possible to perform Family Reading activities (e.g., recruitment, record keeping, etc.).

Recommendation 3: Explore different ways of recruiting more parents eligible to participate in the program.

Some programs had difficulty recruiting the number and eligible parents for the program. Additional recruitment methods focussing on schools and other social agencies should be explored. Since one of the best ways to attract adult learners is through word-of-mouth, Family Reading programs might adopt a "bring a friend" night, or "open house", where current participants bring a friend or relative to the center.

Recommendation 4: Provide more instructional materials for parents transitioning to English.

Criteria have been set for transition from Spanish writing to English writing, however, more materials to help this transition process need to be made available to the programs. An "English Transitional Learning Package" could be developed to address this issue.

Recommendation 5: Provide for more literacy-related (including AV, video, etc.) materials for the CBO Library.

Most programs had a location for the CBO Library, but many felt the need to purchase more relevant materials for parents (and children). Perhaps the NCLR can send a list of typical types of materials and locations where they can be purchased to each Family Reading program.

Recommendation 6: Incorporate the HLE LOG into the writing exercises.

Most programs have addressed the Home Literacy Events (HLE) component by discussing them at the beginning of each session. Programs are encouraged to have their parents write about their successes with Home Literacy Events as writing exercises. Perhaps incorporating or using a LOG (similar to a diary) can help monitor the progress of HLE's.

Recommendation 7: Provide more suggestions on teaching LEA lessons relative to family topics.

Since the LEA instructional approach used in the PACLIM model is method-driven and not curriculum-driven, teaching strategies are of utmost importance. Program staff need additional "how to" advice on teaching the LEA method. More materials can be developed, especially as programs begin to report which methods or themes worked best for them. Further, with the entry of five additional community based organizations joining the Family Reading program in the next cycle, more materials can be developed and shared throughout the Family Reading program network.

Design or Implementation Problems

During the first year, NCLR staff recognized that the majority of the Family Reading programs used "whole-group" approaches to teaching parents. This approach made the use of the CALPEP CLC LEVELS (initially proposed as an outcome measure) difficult to use. Originally, CALPEP was designed for the California Literacy Campaign (CLC). The instructional delivery system in this program was one-on-one tutoring. CALPEP does not work as well with group instruction, therefore the decision was made to replace CALPEP CLC LEVELS with a holistic scoring procedure to document learner progress.

This change, as it turns out, was for the better. Parents' actual writing samples are evaluated using the holistic scoring method and holistic scores are also used as "benchmarks" to signal transition into English writing (for those parents who did not start instruction in English).

Recruitment of parents presented a special challenge for Family Reading programs. Local staff needed additional time to communicate with existing networks (e.g., churches, social agencies, schools, etc.) in the community in order to recruit eligible parents into the program. In some cases, the lack of parents delayed the implementation of the program.

Discussion

Generally, the Family Reading program has had a successful start. Programs have established the instructional environment to implement the PACLIM model. That is, each program has provided a location for the instruction of parents, use of the computer lab, and a location to house books for the CBO Library. The minimum number of staff needed to implement the model have been hired or recruited as volunteers, even though more assistance could be used in this area.

A satisfactory number of parents have been recruited to participate in the Family Reading program. Parents have been in-serviced on the PACLIM model and they have agreed to participate in the program. In-take interviews that provided baseline data were conducted -- in many cases -- in the parents' homes thus creating a positive rapport for future Family Reading activities.

The assessment component of the instructional model used with Family Reading has begun in a timely manner this first program year. Parents' writing ability has been pre-assessed using a "prompt" developed for that purpose. Both pre- and post assessments have been completed and subsequent results will be presented in the second program year evaluation.

Therefore, the results of this first program year are indeed encouraging. Despite the usual problems encountered during a "start-up" year, programs have implemented the Family Reading program in an impressive manner. Programs will continue to develop recruitment plans and gain experience using the PACLIM model to provide literacy improvement to parents. Also, over time, successful lessons and teaching methods used in the field will be identified and incorporated into the "curriculum guide" to be shared with the other Family Reading programs.